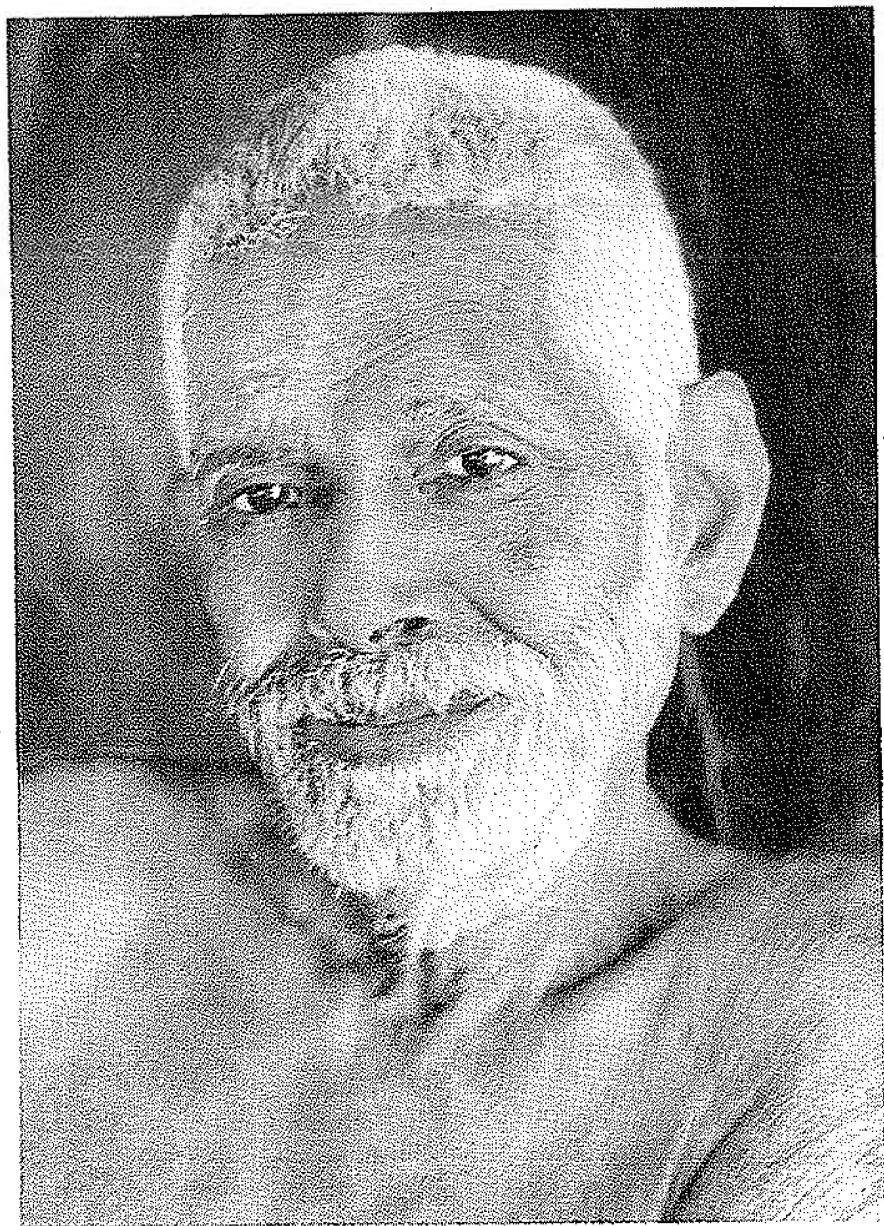


GURU-RAMANA-VACHANA-MALA

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BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Sri Ramaṇa's words in any shape are always welcome to the intelligent public either in India or elsewhere. The poet-scholar-devotee Sri Murugaṇār, was a man of retiring disposition and deep understanding. He was a Tamil scholar of rare accomplishments, now leading a saintly life in the neighbourhood of the Āsramam. For several years he had been in personal attendance on Bhagavān Sri Ramaṇa Mahārṣi and ever since 1926 in close touch with Him whose profound teachings were written down by him in his own inimitable way in Tamil. These are now made available in English to the interested public by 'WHO' (Sri K. Lakshmana Sarma), who himself had been in close touch with Śrī Mahārṣi for over twenty years and whose book MAHA YOGA is still a classical text in Ramaṇa literature. The contents of this book associated with these three names will, I am sure, be eagerly read by all.

PUBLISHER

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करुणापूर्णं सुधाब्धे कवलितधनविश्वरूप किरणावल्या ।
अरुणाचलपरमात्मन्नरुणो भव चित्तकञ्जसुविकासाय ॥

*The first verse of "Arunāchala Pancharatnam"
by Bhagavān Śrī Ramaṇa Maḥarṣi*

Oh Nectar-Ocean filled with Grace,
Oh Self Supreme, consuming all
By boundless Light, be Thou the Sun
For the Heart-Lotus's blossoming.

THE TRUTH OF ARUNĀCHALA

The Arunāchaia, who is not within reach of the mind so long as the sense of 'I am the body' prevails, is the Real Self in the Heart.

Translation of a Tamil verse by Śrī Muruganār

THE TRUTH OF THE VISION OF THE LIGHT OF ARUNĀCHALA

*The Vision of the Light of Arunāchala is the Seeing of the Secondless Truth of one's own Self, by turning the mind towards that Self, through giving up the sense 'I am the body'.

Translation of a Tamil verse composed by Śrī Bhagavān

*Here the following should be noted. There is, in the south of Bhārata-Varsha, a sacred Hill, Arunāchala, worshipped by the Śaivas as a form of Śiva. On Its Top, every year in the Fullmoon of the month of *Kārtika*, a great Beacon is lit up. The Light is easily visible even to those that live 20 miles away. Devotees regard this Light as the form of Arunāchala. Lakhs of people come to see that Light, thereby to purify themselves. It should be understood that in the above two sentences the Vedāntic truth of the seeing of this Light, is expressed.

Guru - Ramaṇa - Vachana - Mālā

TRANSLATION*

INTRODUCTORY VERSES

1. Obeisance to the unique Being, the One Self in all, namely the serene and unfathomable Bhagavān Ramaṇa, who has no ego and no possessiveness.

2. The compilation of the oral teachings of Bhagavān Ramaṇa, made by the saintly Murugaṇār, is here rendered into Sanskrit.

3. This work, named *Paramārtha Dīpa*, is the essence of the Vedānta and is (hence) worthy to be studied many times over by the seekers of the State of Liberation.

*The original of the present translation of *Guru-Ramaṇa-Vachana-Mālā* is mostly a Sanskrit rendering of selected verses from the *Guru Vāchakakkovai* of Sri Murugaṇār, which is in Tamil, with a few more added, embodying the oral teachings of Bhagavān Śrī Ramaṇa.

CHAPTER I—DISCRIMINATION

1. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WORLD

4. To become aware of the Real Self, since He is ever-present within the Heart of every one, would be very easy if the notion that the body and the world are real should become utterly extinct.

5. Oh man who, believing the world to be real, has been cheated of happiness, like the parrot that expected to eat the ripe fruit of the silk-cotton tree, what proof have you that the world really exists?

6. If you think that this (world) is real because it appears, then conclude that mirage-water also is real, because it (also) appears. What (material) difference is there (between these two)?

7. How can the world, which is diversified by space and time, mutable and transient, be real? That alone is real, which is eternal, unchanging and beyond space and time; nothing else.

8. All this appears whenever there is mental activity, that is, in the dream and waking states; not only does it not appear in deep sleep, but it does not appear in the Transcendental State, where the Self is alone, and the mind is at rest; therefore it is unreal.

9. Revelation does describe creation in diverse ways (in different places); that must not be understood literally; the purpose of these (passages) is to indicate that which

is the Source of the world and the (individual) soul, not to enjoin a belief in the fact of creation.¹

10. If the individual soul and the world be taken as real, then how can the Supreme Being be infinite (as He is declared to be by Revelation)? Unless His infiniteness be given up, how can this contention (that the soul and the world are real) be right?²

11. The real meaning of the two (teachings), namely that "He Himself became all this," and that "That same Overself created all this," is that the world is just a false appearance in Him.³

12. As the dog conceals the stone (of which it is made), when taken to be a (real) dog, and is (seen to be) only stone, and not a dog, when its truth is known, so is this world (in the states of ignorance and of Illumination, respectively).

¹Revelation always *begins* by making concessions to ignorance, treating the superstitious notions of the novice as tentatively true; but it ends by denying them all. The truth is, as explicitly declared by the Sage, that Self-Realisation is not a process of learning something new, but of unlearning—of eliminating all the false knowledge that the ego-mind has gathered in the course of numerous lives.

²In the previous sentence an objection sought to be sustained by portions of Revelation was disposed of; here it is shown that a fundamental teaching of Revelation itself is irreconcilable with it; the Reality is declared to be *all that is*, that is to say, infinite; this is explained away by the theologians; but it is considered to be fundamental by the believers called *Advaitins*; to this teaching all else is subordinate; their interpretation is here declared to be the right one.

³Revelation declares that the Supreme Reality is both the material and the efficient cause of the world; it is here explained that It can be both, only if the world is unreal.

13. So long as this world appears, its substance, the Real Self, does not appear; when the world ceases to appear, the Real Self appears as He really is.⁴

14. This world, which is of the stuff of dreams, (but) appears as real by veiling the Self, will be seen as the Self Itself, if it be veiled by the Self.⁵

15. As the many-hued peacock is but the substance of the egg, so this (variegated) world is the Self and nothing else; thus wilt thou see when thou art in thy Natural State (as the Real Self).⁶

16. To him—(the sage)—that never strays from the Self, who is Consciousness, this world is of the essence of the Self; therefore he says that the world is real.⁷

⁴Sentences 12 and 13 should be read together; what exists is one, the real self; It appears as the three—the world, its seer the soul, and God the Lord of both—when ignorance prevails; what this ignorance is will be stated in the section on bondage; when ignorance is overpassed, then It is no longer seen as these three, but appears as it really is, as the infinite ineffable self; It cannot appear as both at the same time; the reason of this is to be gathered from the illustration of the dog sculptured in stone; the next sentence makes this plainer.

⁵In ignorance the world—in which must be considered as included both God and the soul—veils the self; in illumination the Self veils the world; that is to say, the Self alone is real.

⁶The *Purvardham* of the original verse should be read as follows:

बहुवर्णकोऽपि केकी यथाण्डरस एव तद्वदखिलमपि ।

⁷The question, 'Is the world real?' does not admit of a categorical answer, because the question itself is ambiguous. The sage tells us that it is not wrong to say that it is unreal and that it is real, provided both statements are understood to mean the same thing. This has been explained in MAHA YOGA; we are to understand that the world is unreal in the sense that the names and forms that diversify it are unreal, but real in the sense that the something, on which the names and forms

17. (But) how can the unenlightened one, who is without experience of the Reality and (consequently) sees the world as 'outside' of and distinct from himself, understand the true meaning of this saying of the sage?⁸

18. The world is (said to be) God's creation, to those that delight in it, regarding it as real; but it should be regarded as of the stuff of the mind by those that seek to know the Truth (of the Self) in order to become free (from bondage).⁹

19. The world is not other than body; the body is not other than mind; the mind is not other than Pure Consciousness. That exists unborn in Peace.¹⁰

20. There is neither creation nor destruction; there is no one that is bound, nor one striving for liberation: nor is there any liberated person; such is the truth as realised by the sages.

21. There is no mind, nor body, nor world, nor any one called a soul; the One pure Reality alone exists, with-

are superimposed by the ego-mind, is real; It is in this sense that the Sage calls the world real. He does *not* endorse the common man's view that the world is real with all its names and forms.

⁸The difference between the sage and the common man is here indicated; the latter looks upon the world as other than the Self; the former does not; hence the misunderstanding.

⁹The seeker of Liberation (*Sādhaka*) must regard the world as subjective—consisting of thoughts—just like the dreamworld; he must scrutinise as set forth in the second chapter and then follow the method of the Quest described there. It is not safe for him to look upon the world as real; if he does so he cannot engage the mind in the Quest.

¹⁰This and the following two sentences set forth the teaching called the *Ajāti-Siddhānta* (the conclusion that the Reality never really became the world, but remains ever unchanged).

out a second, unborn and unchanging, abiding in utter Peace.

22. Though the holy Ramana has uttered teachings (of diverse tenor) to suit the minds of questioners, the teaching that he has given (us) as being in accord with his own experience is the 'Teaching of the Unborn', (which has been stated above).

23. Therefore only by renouncing the world as illusory and turning the mind inwards can one dive into the Heart, persevering in the will to realise the Self, and thus attain Liberation.¹¹

2. DESIRELESSNESS

24. The mind revels in sense-objects, turning away from her rightful lord the Real Self, who is bliss; this is sheer unchastity.¹²

25. The Realisation of the truth of the Self, whose nature is Reality, Consciousness and Bliss, comes easily to those who, as a result of their good deeds in past lives, are unattached to the pleasures that there are in this and other worlds.¹³

¹¹The teaching in this section is only for those that are earnest to realise the Real Self by the method of the Quest taught in the second Chapter. It is not intended as a mere philosophical or religious belief.

¹²Here the mind is compared to an unchaste wife; real happiness is in the Self, not in objects of sense; this is definitely set forth later on.

¹³All worlds are alike within relativity and are hence to be transcended; the world in which the gods live, and to which good men go after death, namely heaven, is not desirable, because the happiness enjoyed there is the fruit of *Karma*, and hence must come to an end, after which they must come back and be born again.

26. The realisation of the Self is not easy for those whose minds are in slavery to desires; let them attain desirelessness by profound devotion to God, who is desireless.

27. As one that, being caught in the flood of a river, and trying to reach the shore, fails to do so, being prevented by boys throwing stones at him, so those that try to attain Self-Realisation, which is the shore of the river of *Samsāra* (relative existence), fail to reach it, being hindered by the *vāsanās* (taints of the mind).¹⁴

28. If the *vāsanās* that come forth from the mind, like soldiers from within a fort, are then and there killed by the sword of the Quest of the Self, the mind is (finally) conquered.

29. The seeker of liberation must understand that the truth of desirelessness is the prompt extinguishment of every thought, as and when it arises, in its source (the Heart), by the practice of the Quest.¹⁵

30. The ignorant look upon Peace and Power as two things, distinct from each other; that which is Peace in the introverted state (of the mind), is Power in the (mind's) extroverted state.¹⁶

¹⁴The mind is usually burdened with habits of attachments and modes of thought, accumulated and confirmed through many lives; these are called *vāsanās*; the mind needs to be purified of these, before it can take to the Quest taught here.

¹⁵Every thought that arises is an occasion for the question 'To whom does this thought arise?' The answer to this being 'To me', the next step is to raise and keep hold of the question 'Who am I?' Thus the thought is displaced. Practice in this wise leads to subjugation of the mind.

¹⁶Peace, the cessation of the mind's restlessness, is itself the State of Liberation. It is the fullness of power; whoever has Peace has all

31. Praying for powers—which should be despised (by *Sādhakās*)—from God who is ready to give His own Self to His devotee, is like begging for stale food from a rich person that gives freely.¹⁷

32. Restfulness of the mind is itself Liberation; that being so, how can they, whose minds are fixed on the (attainment of) powers, which are to be won by mental activity, ever attain the bliss of Liberation?¹⁸

33. Like one that takes medicine to worsen his disease those that are deluded by the sense 'I am the body,' which is the root-cause of all ills, seek to attain durability of the body by practising *tapas*.¹⁹

power. Powers of various kinds are desired by those who, being ignorant of the truth here stated, do not care for Peace; their folly is described in what follows.

¹⁷God is the All; so he that gets God Himself by devotion has all; he cannot possibly have any unfulfilled wish. सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह 'he attains the fulfilment of all desires at once'—says an Upaniṣad. Jesus said the same thing when He said: "Seek ye the Kingdom of God first, and all these things will be added unto you."

¹⁸Not by striving, but by ceasing to strive, does the Peace come, which transcends the mind. The reason is that this Peace is our own Nature; not something to be won. Those that seek to win these powers—which are called *siddhis*—are misguided men, who forge for themselves stronger fetters than those that bind common men, whose desires are pitched lower.

¹⁹This word seems to be untranslatable, there being no single word in the English language for it. The meaning can be gathered from particular forms of *tapas*; meditation, worship of God, self-denial or self-restraint in various forms, are called *tapas*. These are practised either for winning boons from God, or simply for mental purification, preparatory to the pursuit of the Quest of the Real Self.

34. Once upon a time Dadhyangātharavaṇa said: "A dog enjoys with a bitch the same pleasure that Indra (the Chief of the gods in Heaven) enjoys with Indrāṇi (his consort)." ²⁰

35. The unenlightened man thinks 'I am enjoying (these) pleasures,' and is thus ever deluded by the craving for pleasures; he does not know the truth (of the matter), namely that the pleasures are eating up (his) vitality.

36. The serpent kills by biting; but the five-mouthed serpent, namely desire for (enjoying) sense-objects, kills through (mere) thought or sight (of the objects).

37. The happiness that is enjoyed in sleep, in a swoon, when something desired is won, and when something hated is destroyed, is due to the (temporary) union of the mind with the Self in the Heart.

38. One should know that the pleasures that are believed to arise from sense-objects, both are and in the other worlds, are really minute fractions of (the happiness of) Self-Realisation, and not at all independent.

39. A hungry man is satisfied by eating unappetising food, just as if he had eaten tasty food; it follows that pleasure is not from the object, but from the (cessation of the) desire for it: ²¹

²⁰The gods here mentioned are somewhat analogous to the angels of the Christian lore. They live in a heaven of their own, and have a King over them, who is known as Indra; his spouse is named Indrāṇi.

²¹Earthly enjoyment is here shown to be due to the temporary quiescence of the mind in the heart, due to the cessation of desire; while desire prevailed, the natural happiness of the Self was obstructed; when it ceased, that happiness became free from obstruction; no new happiness is ever created. If it were otherwise, insipid food can never be tasty, which it is sometimes.

40. A dog gets pleased, tasting its own blood, when it chews a bone without any meat on it; likewise men are infatuated over sense-objects, enjoying only the happiness that is their own.

41. Even after experiencing great happiness in sleep, where there are no objects, man desires objects for the sake of pleasure, because of ignorance due to want of inquiry.²²

42. The truth about happiness and suffering, which has been correctly determined by the wise, is this: outwardness of the mind is suffering; (its) inwardness is happiness.

43. The sheaths are like the father-in-law's house (to a new bride); the Supreme Reality, which is Pure Consciousness in the Heart, is like the parents' house; so one should cast off the suffering there is in the former by getting fixed in the latter.²³

44. Desire exaggerates an object, which is unattained, to the size of the *Meru*; after it is attained, it reduces the same thing to atomic size; therefore we know of no abyss so difficult to fill up as desire.

45. Since it has been said that desire for even the Supreme State should be renounced, need it be said that love of things other than the Self, such as the body, should be altogether renounced by strivers for liberation?

²²The process of this inquiry is set forth in the second chapter of 'MAHA YOGA'.

²³Here the reference is to the return of a new bride to her parents' house, for relief from the trials that beset her in the husband's home; the return is mostly temporary, whereas the return of the mind to its Source is to be permanent. The sheaths are bodies of varying fineness, covering the Self.

46. "The individual, the world and God are illusory creations in the Supreme Reality, like the snake in the rope," knowing thus, be happy in unity with that blissful One, by dissolving the three in Him.

47. Self-Realisation is the non-appearance of the world as world and as non-Self; desirelessness is the renunciation of it, realising its illusory nature.²⁴

3. THE THREE STATES

48. The two states, waking and dream, are filled up by forms and names, which are the creations of the restless mind; therefore they are alike unreal.

49. A partial unfoldment of the ego-sense is called dream; the complete expression of it is called waking; both are alike rooted in the ego-sense.

50. It is not reasonable to object, saying, "Dream is a creation of the mind; but waking is not so." Each in its own time seems real; there is no material difference.

51. By the self-deceiving power of the mind the waking state appears to be long and the dream-state to be short; (really) the thing called time is (itself) a mental form (not real).

²⁴Here the distinction between the sage and the duly qualified *Sādhaka* is explained; the former has transcended relativity and hence does not see the world as world; to him the Self alone appears. The latter sees the world as we do, but has the conviction that the names and forms of which it consists, together with time, space and other elements that sustain its variety, are unreal. Desirelessness when based on such a conviction is likely to be more complete than when it is based on a knowledge of its futility as a means of happiness.

52. The dream-body is obviously different from the waking one; when the *karma* giving rise to the dream becomes active, the mind necessarily take on another body.²⁵

53. The emission of semen in the waking body, caused by the dreamer enjoying sexual union with a dream-woman, is due to the speed with which the mind enters the waking body, leaving the other.

54. Because of the conviction of identity (of the Self) with the sheath of intelligence—which men are subject to—it is said that a sheath of happiness survived in sleep; when the former is dissolved (in Self-Realisation), supreme happiness alone remains.²⁶

55. When there is an end of the impurity of the mind which is beginningless, and which is the root-cause of the states of waking and dream, then (this)state of dull, dream-

²⁵*Karma*, which literally means 'action', here means the previous actions, which determine the course of life, its pleasures and sufferings. There is nothing in common between waking and dream except the mind. which creates two distinct worlds in the two states.

²⁶The Vedāntic lore distinguishes five sheaths of different degrees of fineness; the grossest of all is the 'food-sheath', composed of flesh and bone; the next in order is the vital sheath; the third is the mental sheath; the fourth is the sheath of intelligence; all these are active in waking and dream and become latent in sleep; a fifth sheath, called the sheath of happiness—consisting of ignorance—is said to survive in dreamless sleep, to account for the return to bondage on waking. Strictly, according to the Sage, the fourth and fifth sheaths are one and the same. If they were different it should be possible for the *Sādhaka* to attain Self-Realisation from or through the state of deep sleep; but that is not possible as explained in 'MAHA YOGA'; to transcend relativity he has to practise the necessary method while awake and without falling into sleep or yogic trance; therefore it stands to reason that the two last sheaths are inseparable.

less sleep will itself become transformed into the state of transcendental Consciousness, (which is the Natural State of the Self).

56. As the four (grosser) forms of matter do not really exist apart from the ether (of space), so the three states should be understood by the wise one to be not really apart from the transcendental State.²⁷

57. (In the course of instruction given) to those that have not overcome the nescience (that survives) in sleep and become established in the transcendental State, it is said that there are (these) three states, the fourth (transcendental) state, and another transcending the fourth.²⁸

58. So long as there is one (the ego or individual soul) having the sense of living in the (three) states, the states are experienced; when he ceases to be, as a result of the Quest of the Self, then there remains only the transcendental State, which (alone) is real.

4. THE TRUTH ABOUT BONDAGE

59. The so-called *jīva*, who is nothing more than the knot (nexus) between Pure Consciousness and the insentient (body), and who arises in the body as 'I', is himself bondage and the bound one, both in one.

²⁷The term used in the original is *Turīya* which literally means the fourth; this is not intended to be accurate, since otherwise the three states, which are part of the world, would be real; the correct term is *Atīta* which means transcendental'. The subject is dealt with in MAHA YOGA.

²⁸This statement is not meant to be strictly accurate; the Sage has clearly stated that there is only one Transcendental state, called *Turīya*, but really *Atīta*.

60. These mad actors that wallow in the misery of relative existence are merely hallucinations that are variously projected by imagination in the sky of Pure Consciousness, namely the Real Self.²⁹

61. Man becomes an insignificant *jīva* and suffers endless misery, because of his fall from his original fearless nature, like hair fallen from (its place on) the head.³⁰

62. This ego is (to be regarded as) a ghost appointed by the Overself (God) to keep the body intact so long as (the current) *karma* is not spent by their fruits being experienced.

63. Forgetting one's real nature and getting exiled from the world³¹ of the Real Self, the world-bound one becomes a prisoner in the body and is swallowed up by the serpent *Mōha*.³²

64. Strange indeed is this: This *Māyā*, namely the mind, is not real; but those that are bitten by this (unreal) serpent are losing their lives.³³

²⁹The multiplicity of selves is a necessary consequence of the ego-sense being limited to one out of the numerous bodies seen by the mind; it is not more real than the bodies.

³⁰The fall mentioned here is not real; the truth as confirmed by the experience of the sages is that there was never a fall; these statements are not intended to be the last word on the Truth. Hence questions such as: How came the Self to fall from his natural State, or the like, are inadmissible; when such questions are asked, the Sage as a rule replies: "Find who you are,—you who propound these questions."

³¹The use of the word 'world' in connection with the Self is always figurative, not literal, since the Self transcends *all* the worlds.

³²The term *Mōha* here means the delusion that happiness is to be had from sense-objects.

³³The loss of the natural state is the real loss of life; the so-called loss of life by the death of the body is not real.

65. Those that cherish the belief that the body—which surely converts sweet smelling food into ordoure after (eating),— is the Self, are lower still than the pig.³⁴

66. The *jīva* (individual soul) who is called 'I', does not really exist; if he exists at all, then he is just the Supreme. Reality, just as the seeming snake is just the rope (in which it appears).

67. That very mind, which by subjection to desires becomes finite as the *jīva* and suffers endlessly, is itself the Supreme and Infinite Being when it becomes desireless and moveless.³⁵

68. Since birth and death have come by the idea 'I am the body,' the immortality which is natural to the Self is realised as soon as this delusion ceases.

69. Just as the tenth man—in the story of the tenth man—counted (the others) leaving out himself, the first, so, man leaves out his own Self and thinks of sense-objects.³⁶

³⁴The physical body is more filthy than even filth, because it can convert good food into filth.

³⁵What is called *jīva* is nothing but the ego-mind, which again is but, an appearance in the Real Self; the appearance derives vitality and longevity from desires; when by the Quest of the Self all desires are extinguished in the Experience called Self-Realisation, the ego-mind also ceases and the Self alone remains.

³⁶The above is an important parable of Advaita Vedānta, illustrating, the ultimate teaching namely that the Real Self was never lost, and does not need to be recovered—that what is needed is the giving up of false knowledge. The story is as follows: ten men crossed a river and then counted themselves to make sure that none was missing; but each man forgot to count himself; so they came to the conclusion that the tenth man had been lost; a stranger who came there learned the cause of their trouble and convinced them that none was lost, by asking some one to count again; when the counter had counted nine, leaving himself

70. Neglecting to inquire 'How am I *now*', men vainly ask 'what was I before', and 'what shall I be hereafter?'³⁷

71. This *jīva* who has sprung from the Infinite Being, like a bird springing up from its nest and wandering in the sky (and necessarily returns to its nest), will surely (return and) merge into its Source, namely the Infinite, even in spite of hindrances.³⁸

72. The inner meaning of the (Biblical) narrative, that Jesus rose up after being crucified and went to heaven, has been shown by the Guru as follows:

73. The body is the cross; the sense of its self-hood is named Jesus; his attainment of the State of the Real Self by the extinction of that sense is the resurrection.³⁹

74. All those men that have won this State are (alike) Sons of God, since they have overcome *Māyā*; they are worthy of being adored.⁴⁰

out as before, the stranger made them see that the counter himself was the tenth man; here the tenth man was never lost; so too the Self is never lost, but only ignored.

³⁷Half-philosophers are busy trying to find out by occult means some facts about their previous births, and to learn something about their future state; such questions arise from the notion that they are *now* embodied; but that is not true; the Self is ever-free and bodiless; Deliverance is here and now; space and time are mere illusions; hence preoccupation with questions like these is a mistake.

³⁸All individuals are alike destined to attain the Supreme State; some attain it sooner and others after many births; that is all the difference; the notion of eternal damnation is illogical; Advaita Vedānta condemns the dogma as contrary to the testimony of the sages.

³⁹The body resembles the cross, since the varied experience of embodied existence leads indirectly, through discrimination, to the extinction of the ego.

⁴⁰The Christian dogma, that Jesus is the only Son of God, is not approved.

75. If this so-called *jīva*, arising as I out of the darkness (of ignorance), like the pretended companion of the bride-groom (of the story), be forced to flee by the Quest (of the Real Self), then the truth of the Real Self will shine of itself⁴¹

76. One should not be afraid that in the Egoless State the Self will be lost. Who ever became himself lost in sleep, where there is no ego?⁴²

77. Only by becoming aware of the truth of the Self, —by the forgetting of which this great and endless suffering of relative existence has been incurred—does one get rid of (that) suffering, not by any other means.

78. He that abides in peace and without desires, as the limitless Reality—Consciousness—Bliss, through the thoughts, is established in the Supreme Silence.

⁴¹The parable referred to is as follows: When a marriage was being celebrated, a man came in, pretending to be the bosom friend of the bride-groom, and was admitted without question; but after a time doubts arose and an inquiry was started; when the impostor came to know this he at once made himself scarce. Here the so called *jīva* is the impostor, who has to be got rid of by the Quest of the Real Self.

⁴²Half-philosophers confound the ego with the Self and hence are afraid of the Egoless State; that this is irrational is proved by common experience; in the sound, dreamless sleep that comes naturally to healthy people, there is intense happiness, showing that the Self exists then. Thus even without the appeal to Revelation one can see that these men are wrong.

5. INFERENCEAL KNOWLEDGE⁴³

79. As a *rākṣasa* is (ironically) called *punya-jana* (righteous being), so is indirect knowledge of the Self (who is never absent—as if he were something absent), designated as Knowledge.⁴⁴

⁴³The state of Deliverance is called 'Self-Knowledge;' this phrase is misleading; its correct significance is given in the last chapter. It must suffice here to say that the term 'Knowledge' does not bear here the meaning it bears in worldly affairs. In this section one of the misconceptions arising from the use of this word is disposed of. Knowledge of objects is either direct or inferential. Knowledge is direct when the object is present to the mind or the senses; thus knowledge of one's own sensations or feelings, as well as knowledge of sense-objects that are present, is called direct knowledge. Where the object is far away or otherwise not available for such knowledge, any knowledge of it derived otherwise is inferential; it is mere opinion. This distinction is all right in respect of things other than the Self. Strictly speaking, so-called direct knowledge is itself only inferential, because the knowledge is never immediate; it arises through a medium, the mind or the senses. The Self on the other hand is never absent, and consequently never unknown. As the Sage points out, every one knows that he is; this knowledge is always immediate and inalienable. Every one thinks and says 'I am'; to this he adds a predicate, and says 'I am so and so,' implying that he is a particular body, physical or mental, or both; the addition of this predicate is really a subtraction; it reduces the infinite Self—expressed as 'I am'—to a finite being. Leaving out this limitation, we see that there is no one—not even a worm—that knows not the Self. This is due to the fact that the Self is the Self, and therefore never absent. The half-philosophers are unaware of this profound but self evident fact and hence made the mistake of treating the Self as something absent and therefore capable of being known inferentially, through books or otherwise; they even get satisfied with such so-called knowledge; the truth above stated—that the Self is not the object of such knowledge—is here made clear, so that *sādhakas* may not go astray.

⁴⁴*Rākṣasas* belong to an order of creation analogous to the Titans of the ancient Greek legends. They are as a rule the enemies of the res,

80. When mirage-water serves to quench thirst, and painted fire to cook meals, then deliverance can be had by mere book-knowledge.⁴⁵

81. Only sense-objects are absent; to all alike the Self is ever present; (but men) seek to know Him through book-knowledge, as if He were absent.

82. Even a book, that has been studied zealously as giving true knowledge, will come to be wholly forgotten and lost to the *Sādhaka*, when his mind turns inwards in practising the means prescribed for Self-Realisation (namely the Quest).

83. He that comes to see that the essence of all book-lore is that Peace of Mind is Deliverance, must practise pacification of the mind. What for should he go on studying books?

84. As an immature girl may think that the festivities of marriage are conjugal enjoyment, so the man that has not won Experience of the Truth believes book-knowledge to be (the same as that) Experience.

85. Such a one, being mistakenly convinced that he has won real knowledge, while being devoid of Experience,

of creation, and are described as systematically unrighteous. In more recent ages they have incarnated as humans; this theory explains the increase of wickedness among men and women. However some exceptionally virtuous and devout persons are described in the ancient lore as having sprung among the *Rākṣasas*.

⁴⁵Inferential knowledge, based upon books, or arrived at by a mental process, is not inimical to the ego-sense, the extinction of which is essential to Deliverance; it may even give a new lease of life to the ego and thus postpone deliverance indefinitely. In fact book-knowledge is an additional source of bondage to those that are satisfied with it, instead of striving to obtain actual Experience of the central Truth conveyed in the books.

presumes to test, by the skill of his intelligence, the knower of that Truth, who is firmly established in the transcendental Silence.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Not by mere intelligence, but by intuition, can the sage be rightly understood. Intuition is a faculty that is dormant in the worldly man. It stands midway between human reason and the supreme wisdom that is Self-Realisation. Intuition is similar to inspiration in its essence; the latter is only occasionally active; the former is more frequent; this is probably all the difference there is between them.

CHAPTER II—THE QUEST

6. DEVOTION

86. The truth of the Supreme Being is the One Infinite Reality transcending all relativity, which is the fundamental Substance of the 'I', which is the basis of the world.¹

87. Only the one, whose mind is ripened by supreme devotion to Him, can attain Deliverance through zeal for the Quest of the Self and inward turning of the mind.

88. The might of God's grace *and* the Quest of the Self in the form of (the question) 'Who am I?'—these two together lead the seeker (*Sādhaka*) to the Heart and give him the Supreme State, which is the state of (his own) Real Self.

89. If God—who is in the Heart—does not draw the (*Sādhaka's*) mind inwards by the might of His grace

¹The ego, which is felt as 'I', is the starting point of all creation, because without the ego there can be no manifestation of a world; as soon as the ego disappears in sleep the world-appearance ceases; therefore it is said that the ego is the basis of the world. The ego in its turn is an appearance in the Infinite Reality; the latter is the eternal Substance, without which there can be no ego, nor mind. Hence this Infinite is alone real; the three, namely God, the soul and the world of objects, are only illusory appearances in the Infinite. But this is valid only when the ego dies in the Light of Self-Realisation. While the ego—though unreal—is being regarded as real, it does not lie in the mouth of an ego-ridden person to say that God is not real; the truth is, for a *Sādhaka* God is real as such. It is said in Vedānta that the Infinite is the Impersonal and God the Personal aspect of the Real Self. So long as the *Sādhaka* regards himself as a person, God is to him a Person. Hence there is room for devotion in Vedānta.

who can attain Peace by diving into the Heart, by the (mere) power of his own mind, which is treacherous?

90. If the duties fulfilled according to the injunctions (of the sacred lore) fail to generate devotion to the Supreme Being, then all such activity is vain; it is (even) equal to sinful conduct, since it creates (fresh) bondage.²

91. Since even (the gods) Vāyu and Agni were unable to lift or burn a blade of grass, (in the presence of God), how can an ego-ridden person accomplish anything what-ever (by his own endeavour, unsustained by Grace)?³

92. The man who is deluded by the conviction 'I am the body' thinks that God's world is outside himself and far away. Really God's world is inside the Heart. (No world in reality).

²Action prescribed by the holy books, if performed more or less unselfishly, purifies the mind and makes it capable of devotion which still further purifies the mind and leads on to Self-Realisation. The same acts performed selfishly produce finite rewards, in the shape of enjoyments here or in heaven; these enjoyments deepen the desire for them; they thus set up a vicious circle which perpetuates bondage.

³The story referred to occurs in the Kenōpanisad. The gods won a victory over the devils (*asuras*); they thought that it was due to their own powers; they failed to remember that God's grace had sustained them in the fight. So to teach them humility God appeared to them as an Effulgence. Indra, the King of the gods, sent first Agni (Fire) and then Vāyu (Air) to find out who it was. God asked them in turn what they could do, and each replied boastfully. Agni was asked to burn a blade of grass, and Vāyu to lift it; both were put to shame, because of their egoism; at last Indra himself came; but then the Effulgence vanished. Then Uma, the Supreme Goddess, appeared and explained to Indra who it was that had appeared, and taught him to be humble, remembering that without Divine grace no one can do anything. From this and other stories we learn that the gods (angels) are only a superior order of beings, and not independent of God.

93. Since the (vital) fire called *Kundalini* flames upwards, and the moon, namely intellect, flows downwards, the Supreme Self, the Sun Consciousness, who is the (one) Source of both, dwells between them in the Heart.

94. "There are two Selves; the individual self is one; the Supeeme is another;" so think the ignorant ones; the Self is only one, not two; the Supreme One is the Real (Self); the other one is a false appearance.

95. Since the Supreme One Himself shines in the heart of every living being as 'I-I',⁴ (it needs to be understood that) thus God teaches all, saying "I am the one (Self) in all."

96. Being himself exactly the Supreme Being, but thinking himself to be separate from Him, (man) strives to become united to Him; what is there stranger than this?

97. As the sky is untainted by the properties of air and the other material elements (in it), as the sun is unaffected by the actions of men, so He, being egoless, is unaffected (by whatever goes on in the world).

98. Power over all and adorability by all came to God, because He never says 'I', even through forgetfulness.

99. The (Supreme) Self is described as being smaller than the tiny atom and greater than the greatest, because He is beyond the reach of the mind, which is itself infinite and atomic.

100. It is said that *Hari* gives Liberation, and that *Hara* gives Illumination but Illumination is the true nature of Liberation; hence *Hari* and *Hara* are one and the same.

⁴'I-I' is the description of the Real Self, because His manifestation as the Self is constant while the ego is not so.

101. God's creation does not bind; that which does so is the *jīva's* own creation; this is illustrated by the story in which through false news the one whose son was alive wept, and the one whose son was dead rejoiced.⁵

102. God's creation surely leads (man), through devotion to the Guru, to the state of Self-Realisation; thus it becomes a means of liberation from bondage, and should therefore be considered as benign.

103. God's grace consists in the act that He shines in the heart of every one as the Self; that power of grace does not exclude any one, whether good or otherwise.

104. That God prompted Kannappa, the great devotee, to offer (to Himself) his own eyes, was in order to confer on him His own state through the extinction of his ego.

105. Those who serve God (Śiva) for the sake of objects desired do not (really) serve God; they serve the desired objects; hence they do not win the (true) reward of devotion.

106. For those great ones that see in their hearts the lotus-feet of God, arises the Light of Consciousness of the One Real Self, through the extinction of their mental taints.

107. Since God is Himself the Self in the heart therefore constant meditation on the Truth of oneself is the devotion that is most pleasing to God.

⁵The parable here referred to is as follows: Two men, sons of different fathers, set out for Benares; on the way one died; the other reached Benares and there met an acquaintance and asked him to convey the news home; the latter bungled the names, and so told the one whose son was alive that he was dead, and the one whose son was dead that he was alive; so the fathers got wrong news.

108. Since His name is 'I', the seeker who constantly practises meditation of the 'I' will be taken inside to the Source of Being, the world of God.

109. It is said: 'The self must be made a gift of to Him'. What is the meaning of this? Is the self separate from the Supreme One, so as to be given to Him?

110. Man is guilty of theft, in thinking himself to be a being separate from that Pure indivisible Consciousness, which is the true nature of the Supreme One.

111. Like the offering of a bit of jaggery, taken off from Lord Ganeśa made of jaggery, is the offering of one's own self to God. Is there any entity called the self, apart from Him?

112. The act of making the ego serve as the food of God, by stilling the mind in the Heart, by the power of devotion to God in His real nature (as the Self), is real offering of ourself to Him⁶.

113. Offering of the self to that which is the reality of God in the Heart, through the extinction of the ego, is the final outcome of long-continued devotion to Him.

114. He that sees the Lord in the temple, the living body, by seeking Him within, can alone see Him, the Infinite, in the temple of the universe, having become the Endless Eye⁷.

⁶Devotion to God as the Real Self is the highest devotion, and this leads to the quiescence of the mind in the Heart and the merger of the ego in God the Real Self; this is the truth of the offering of the self to God which devotees are enjoined to perform.

⁷The true Self, that is realised through devotion or the quest indicated later, is described as the Endless Eye; the eye of flesh is unreal, being part of the body, and active only by association with the mind;

114-A. He that has practised devotion to God in the 'monkey style', through many lives, attains supreme Illumination by the grace of God, through devotion in the 'kitten style.'⁸

115. The man who has the sense of the body being himself cannot possibly worship God as formless; whatever worship he makes will be worship in form alone, not otherwise.⁹

116. (But) he that is unqualified for the formless worship obtains by the grace of God in the end the Illumination of the Real Self, by worshipping Him with form.

117. Whatever one does in the world is worship of God, if he has the conviction that difference does not really

it in its turn is unreal and incapable, but for the shadow of the Real Self, the ego-sense reflected in it; the real Eye is therefore neither of these, but the consciousness which is the Self, which is endless, being the only Reality there is. Seeing God here means being one with Him as the Real Self.

⁸Devotion is described as two-fold; where the devotee relies on personal endeavour it is described as *markata-bhāva*; where reliance is on God alone it is called *mānjāra-bhāva*. The former devotee resembles the baby monkey who keeps hold of its mother by its own effort; the latter resembles the kitten, which the mother carries in her mouth. The usual notion is that the latter is easier; but Bhagavān Ramaṇa tells us that the former is more natural to the beginner in devotion, because the ego-sense is strong in him, and wears off only gradually through devotion; when it is almost gone the other form of devotion becomes more natural. The notion that there is a mode or path that is best for all, irrespective of the individual, is an error; a method is good or otherwise relatively to the one that is to follow it, not in the abstract.

⁹On this point many 'reforming' sectarians are purblind; they deceive themselves, professing to worship God as formless, which is impossible to one that is ego-ridden, as explained above. If one be humble enough he will see that he should do as enjoined by the sacred lore, and would be no loser by it in the end. The next sentence makes it clear.

exist, since all things are only manifestations of God in forms.

118. Days, planets, astrological 'yogas', time-periods, and constellations are *all* auspicious for practising devotion to the Most Auspicious, for those that have (sincere) devotion (to Him).¹⁰

119. Ignorant ones look upon love as the seventh taste; (the truth is that) it is the first and foremost of all tastes, which gives flavour to all the (so-called) other tastes.

120. The One (Real Self) becomes threefold; to the devotee He is God; to the seeker of Illumination He becomes the Guru; when the mind becomes still in the heart He Himself becomes (manifest as) the Real Self.

121. That auspicious and immortal Reality which remains over as the residue, when the individual (false) self is cremated in the fire of Illumination, is the real meaning of the 'holy ash', (*vibhūti*).¹¹

122. Understand that the truth of the vermilion powder (*Kumkumam*, used by some devotees), is the fire of Illumination, by which the delusion 'I am the body' is burnt out in the Heart, as the effect of the quest of the Self.

¹⁰That particular occasions are holy and efficacious for devotional practices is inevitable to novices; it wears off and should wear off, as devotion becomes more and more natural. Particular times are indicated as specially auspicious for devotion, in order to inspire devotion in those that are not easily apt for it.

¹¹What is in use among Saivas as 'holy ash' is a symbol of the Real Self; this idea is recommended for remembrance in the use of the holy ash.

123. Perfect devotion is just the persistence of identity with the One all-embracing Reality, which shines forth when the false 'I' is destroyed utterly in the Heart, by the process of seeking the Self.

7. THE TRUTH OF THE GURU

124. The seeker of Illumination should approach (as a disciple), not the bound one who (merely) knows the sense of the sacred lore, (but) the *Jīvanmukta*, the one that is in the Supreme Silence, who is happy in unity with the Reality.

125. He that has (himself) crossed the ocean of relativity can (alone) help other men to cross (the same); an unenlightened person elected (as Guru) by another unenlightened one is like a blind guide to another blind one.

126. Even if one who has shaken off all faults and won the divine endowment, has gone forth from the house (as a homeless ascetic) and practised discipline (*tapas*), he will not win (complete) happiness, without the company of a (competent) guru.

127. So long as one has the notion 'I am the body', he does not become illumined, even though he has (the merit of) great self-discipline; look upon him as only a *sādhaka* (one that is on the path).

128. Know that he that regards as a (mere) man the Guru who has won Self-Realisation and is nothing but unlimited Pure Consciousness, is a most sinful person with a foul mind.

129. The Supreme Lord Himself appears as Guru in human form to the aspirant, being pleased with (his) devotion.

130. That form of the Free One—who is (in truth) intangible like the sky—which appears to men, is really nothing but the reflection of the form of him that sees (that form); it is not real.

131. It is by delusion that one says: 'I have seen this Sage; I shall see that one also;' if he knows the Sage that is within himself, then all Sages will be (seen to be) one and the same.

132 The Guru reduces only the unreal to nothing, and (thus) causing the one Real Self to shine; thereby he kills, without killing, the false ego.

133 & 134. As in a great forest, a roving robust elephant, seeing the eyes of a lion in the night, loses life and is eaten up by him, so the ego, named 'I', roving in the forest of relativity, is killed by the Guru by mere sight, and is eaten up by Him, out of Grace.

135. As a lion seen in a dream by an elephant, awakens him; so the Guru, who is a Sage, awakens the disciple from the dream of ignorance.

136. Sages alone are the virtuous ones; ignorant ones are without virtue; therefore, for the sake of Deliverance, one should cultivate the society of the Sages, who are delivered from the untruth.

137. The meaning of the saying that one should not approach the Guru empty-handed, is simply this. "One should go to him, who is not distinct from the Supreme Being, with heart full of love".

138. The teaching of the Guru is just the dwelling in the Heart, through the Experience of the One Reality, won by turning the one-pointed mind inwards after understanding that Truth (intellectually).

139. The truth of the *Namaskāra* is just that Silence, wherein the ego, who is the (sole) cause of the distinction between disciple and the Guru, and between God and the soul, springs up no more.

140. Adoration of the Guru is just the not revoking the gift, by means of the ideas, 'I' and 'mine', after surrendering to the Guru everything including the body.

141. The leavings of the Guru are just the words uttered by Him, on the strength of His own Experience. The eating of the leavings is just the remaining fixed in Unity with Him, in silence.

142. True adoration is becoming dissolved in the sea of the homogeneous essence of the Experience of the Self, just as hail gets dissolved in the sea.

143. As a deer seized by a tiger (cannot escape), so a disciple on whom the Guru's gracious looks have rested will never be let go, but will surely be led to the State of *Kaivalyam*.¹²

¹²The State of Liberation, which is also called Self-Realisation or Illumination, is here called *kaivalyam*, (solitude) because in that state the Real Self remains as the sole Reality.

8. THE QUEST OF THE SELF

144. The *Sādhaka* that has learned to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and desires to win liberation from the bondage of realative existence, which consists in the false ego-sense, is worthy to receive the teaching.

145. The highest teaching of the Vedantas, free from doubts, is the state of Supreme Silence brought about by the unification of the Transcendent and the individual soul (which is the ego).

146. For the very earnest *Sādhakas* who are free from desires (of worldly advantage) the inquiry into the real nature of the being, denoted by the word 'Thou' is alone sufficient for the winning of liberation, without any inquiry into the truth of the Being denoted by the word 'That'.¹³

147. Revelation added the words 'That' and 'art' in order to (help to) turn inwards the minds of other *Sādhakas*, whose mentality is unripe, not for anything else.¹⁴

148. Oh mind, thou hast already suffered, thinking 'I am a *jiva*;' do not fall into worse delusion by believing 'I am

¹³In this and the next sentences the real intention of the Vedantic teaching 'Thou art That' is set forth. Here the word 'That' signified the Transcendental Reality called Brahman; 'Thou' signifies the real entity behind the apparent personality of the disciple to whom the teaching is addressed; this teaching is easily misunderstood, and worse still grossly misapplied; hence the explanation given here.

¹⁴Revelation does not give the teaching in this form uniformly; in some places only an injunction to seek and find the Self is given.

Brahman;’ in the Transcendental State there is no one answering to the name of ‘I’.¹⁵

149. Man behaves recklessly, even while believing ‘I am this very little body’; if he begins to think ‘I am that Supreme One’ will anything remain which he would consider wrong to do?

150. The true nature of the real Self in its purity is, the unqualified consciousness ‘I am’; therefore (the *Sādhaka*) should only meditate, ‘I am’ without any predicate, earnestly and constantly.¹⁶

151. The One and only Reality can be experienced only by those that attain peace by stilling the mind’s movements; it is beyond the reach of those whose minds are restless.¹⁷

152. The state of liberated Being can be reached only by dying; but dying does *not* consist in destruction of the body; one should understand that true death is the extinction of the ideas ‘I and mine’.

153. Thou art not the physical body, nor the vital energies, nor sense-organs, nor the mind nor the reasoning

¹⁵The ‘I’ that is the first term of the expression ‘I am Brahman’ is unreal; that is, there is no such being even now; and even the illusory appearance of it will cease when illumination is won. Hence the expression can easily mislead and worsen bondage, instead of taking one to freedom.

¹⁶The safe procedure is here indicated. The ego is a confused mixture of reality and unreality, as explained in MAHA YOGA; the reality of it—the ‘I am’—must be extricted and meditated upon, the goal being the extinction of the ego.

¹⁷Mental activity, starting from the illusion of the ego-sense, spreads forth the phantasm of bewildering multiplicity and fragmentation of the self; if this be effaced and the mind become still, then what is very accurately described as Vision of the Real Self will take place.

faculty, nor the ego, when the *original sin*, which consists in identifying oneself with (any of) these, is given up.

154. The mind is led to perfect quiescence in the heart through the Quest of the Real Self in the form of (the question) 'Who am I?' when the world-appearances ceases. That Being which then shines as 'I AM' is thy Real Self.

155. After understanding the above substance of the teaching of the Vedantas, which is very subtle, one should engage in the Quest of the Real Self, in order to win Liberation through quiescence of the mind.

156. All human thoughts are string upon the thread of the thought 'I am (this) body'; all thoughts (therefore) will cease if one dives into the Heart, seeking (the practical answer to the question) 'Who may I be?'.

157. If all the thought-waves of the mind become stilled in this way, then the Truth of oneself (the Real Self) shines forth of itself as 'I-', the ego dies and happiness is patent.¹⁸

158. The Resolve to see the Real Self in the Heart, by mind concentrated on the question 'Who am I?' is the Quest, but not an intellectual conviction (about the Self) reached by reasoning.

159. This State (of Self-Realisation) cannot be attained by any method, aside from the Quest in the Heart—neither lots of action, nor breath-regulation, nor any other device.

¹⁸Sentences 156 and 157 convey the teachings as expressed by Bhagavan Ramana in the second and third stanzas of his Tamil song '*Atma Vidya*.'

160. Though stillness of the mind may result from breath-regulation or other such practice, the mind is not *finally* stilled (by any of these), as it is by the Quest of the Truth of oneself.

161. Without the inquiry into the true nature of 'the doer', and so on, they speak of paths of four kinds in the world, namely the *Yogas* of action and so forth, for the doer, the one that is sundered (from God), the one that is bereaved (of the Self), and the one that is (conscious of being) ignorant,¹⁹ (and aspires to right knowledge).

162. The State of being the Real Self, which is won by the Quest 'Who is the doer?' or 'Who is the separated one?' or 'Who is the fallen one?', or 'Who is the ignorant one?', is itself all the (four) paths.

163. In this way the immense superiority of the path of *Vichāra* (Quest of the Self) has been clearly shown by the Guru (Ramana); therefore this path, namely the Quest of the Self taught by him, is the greatest of all the *Yogas* (*Mahā Yoga*).

164. Understand that the conviction that the universe has its being in the infinite sky of consciousness, namely the Self, is the firm seat for practising mental peace.

165. So long as the ego is alive, the complexes of threes also appear; one should persevere in the practice (of the Quest) so long as these complexes appear.

¹⁹The four diverse paths, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Raja Yoga*, and *Jnana Yoga*, are prescribed on the assumptions that the follower is naturally a doer of actions, a being separated from God, a being fallen from the State of Perfection, or one actually ignorant; these assumptions are wrong, and will be seen to be so, if the follower of the path first follows the method of the Quest taught here. How this must be so is explained in the next sentence.

166. By fixty of the mind on the Real Self you should conquer both the pleasure and the pain arising from the good and evil deeds (of your past) in the course of life in the world.

167. True subjugation of the mind is being the pure consciousness (which one really is), by the dissolution of the delusion 'I am the mind,' (which comes) when the mind's activities are stilled.²⁰

168. Real breath-regulation is the being of the Enlightened One in his own real Nature, by rejecting the mind's habit of seeing the real as the world and persisting in the Quest of the Self.

169. Those that have devoted themselves to the Quest of the Self never stray aside from the path through error; the path of the Quest leads them on to the supreme State by its own light, like the Sun.

9. THE CONDUCT OF THE *SĀDHAKA*

170. Since Non-remembrance (of the Real Self) is itself death, the only observance binding on the seeker (of the Self) is taking care not to forget, and no other.

171. Since observances do help, the seeker should honour them; but if and when they become hindrances to the practice of the Quest, he should then omit them.

²⁰Mind-Control as commonly attempted consists in mere inhibition of customary mental moods; this is unnatural, as pointed out in the line of the Gita, "All beings follow their ingrained natures; repression can do nothing". This repression on the mental plane is exactly on a par with the modern unscientific methods of preventing acute diseases like small-pox by vaccination and similar methods which consist in sowing the seeds of disease. The natural method of subjugating the mind is given above.

172. Since the doing of one's own (routine) duties conduce to the forgetting of the Self, is it necessary to warn him that he should not engage in actions concerning others?

173. Though the *Sādhaka* may by inadvertance disobey the injunctions of the sacred lore, he should not, as a faithful disciple, be guilty of setting at naught what the Guru tells him.

174. The mightiest *tapas* (mental discipline) is to remain at peace, giving up egoism and the notion of doership (in actions), by the understanding that God does everything.²¹

175. Though thus resigned to God's will, the *Sādhaka* should make efforts in the practice of the right method taught by the Guru, so long as he does not cease to be a *Sādhaka* by the extinction of the ego.

176. Though there are many injunctions to be observed the injunction to eat rightly is declared to be sufficient for the *Sādhaka* to win the Goal of the State of the Real Self, since it enhances the quality of *Sattva*²².

177. Bhagavan Ramana has stated that the belly curses those that eat without giving time for it to rest (and recuperate).²³

²¹Peace of mind, not inaction, is here recommended; God is the prompter from within *Antaryami* and when the mind is cool, free from passion, the urge to act is directly from Him, and may be obeyed.

²²The quality of *Sattva* is explained in books on Vedanta as favourable *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which are more or less inimical to the good life; all the three are described in some detail in Chapters XIV, XVII and XVIII of the Gita.

²³The above summarises the sense of a Tamil varse by the Sage in which the belly is represented as speaking to the soul or *jiva*, upbraid-

178. The rule regarding taking food is that one should allow time enough for the belly (i.e. the stomach and other organs of digestion) to recuperate, and after that, when hunger has come, should eat measured and *Sāttvika* food.²⁴

179. Meditation on a Name or Word, worship of the forms of God and the like do help in the practice of the Quest, by rooting out the old taints of the mind.²⁵

180. As the restlessness of the elephant's trunk is checked by a chain held (by the elephant), so the restlessness of the mind is corrected by meditation on Names or Forms.

181. Never does desire for enjoyment abate by indulgence; (on the other hand) it waxes more and more, as fire does with oblations; remembering this one should be wary.

182. So long as the ego is not dead, humility alone is good for a *Sādhaka*; acceptance of obeisance from others is not good.

183. Since what is light floats on water, and what is heavy goes down, it follows that superiority is not to be inferred from being in a high position, nor inferiority from being in a low one—(in a worldly sense).

ing him for his oppressive conduct;— “You do not let me rest for even half an hour at a time; nor do you forego eating for even half an hour; never do you, oh oppressive being, realise what I suffer; it is not possible for me to get on with you!

²⁴Chapter XVII of the Gita explains in a general way what is *sāttvika* food.

²⁵‘*Japa*’ in the original means fixing the mind on a Name of God or a *Mantra*.

184. The *Sādhaka* who has given up the notion of the body being himself and thus does not think 'I have a family', is superior to the ascetic who thinks 'I am an ascetic'.²⁶

185. A pot takes in water and sinks; a log does not take in water and does not sink; (so too) who so is attached becomes bound; the unattached one is not bound, even if he remains at home.

186. As the regulating block is necessary for the (proper) running of a car, so afflictions are necessary to *Sādhakas* for success in practice.²⁷

187. *Oh Sādhaka*, overcome afflictions with a cool mind, and the firm faith that they occur by the grace of God, to help to steady the mind.

188. It is better for the *Sādhaka* to be in a worldly position arousing compassion from other men, than for him to be in a state to be envied by them.²⁸

189. When any act has become fruitful, do not become proud, thinking 'This was achieved by my enterprise;' (on the other hand), become convinced that God is gracious.

190. When the desired success is not won, it should not be thought that the action has proved unfruitful; the fruit (of it) is just the understanding that actions become

²⁶'I am an ascetic' is a thought based on the primary delusion,—the original sin—that the body is oneself.

²⁷The car of a temple made in the traditional way is controlled in its course and prevented from going aside, by the occasional use of blocks of wood to check the wheels.

²⁸To be prosperous in a worldly sense is as a rule a hindrance to spiritual progress.

fruitful (in the usual sense) by the grace of God, not by mere human effort.

191. After doing a wrong action, one should not hide it from self-love; one should resolve to act rightly in future, avoiding faults.

192. If the *Sādhaka* overlooks the faults of others, and sees only their merits, and thus keeps his mind serene, his whole life will be pleasant.

193. To be unconcerned in all things, with the mind cool, desireless and without hate, is beautiful in a *Sādhaka*.

194. The *Sādhaka's* enemy hates the ego (in the *Sādhaka*) whom the *Sādhaka* wants to kill; thus, like the anvil to the goldsmith, he is actually a friend.

195. Appropriating to oneself specially, thinking 'this is mine,' something that shall not be available to all is not right for a discriminating *Sādhaka*, since it violates the ideal of equality.²⁹

196. By 'fate' is meant only action done by oneself previously with effort; hence with well-directed effort one can wipe off fate.

197. The *Sādhaka* ought not to act as he likes, even to achieve a good result; if the act be done wrongly, it becomes a sinful action.³⁰

198. He that would deserve God's Grace ought not to kill any living being for any reason, since he has not the skill to revive what is dead.

²⁹Such appropriation would be an assertion of individuality, which would give vitality to the ego.

³⁰This is a clear answer to the question; 'Does the end justify the means?' The end never justifies the means; the latter must justify itself.

199. That alone is right action, which is done with a peaceful and pure mind; all action is sinful, which is done with an agitated mind or from desire.

200. What have they to gain by practising *tapas*, who act with mind at peace, without attachment to (objects in) this illusory world, and with the mind activities stilled?

201. The most powerful *tapas* consists in the *Sādhaka* maintaining peace of mind, resigning all his worldly burdens to God.

202. As the grains that are close to the pivot of a hand-mill (are not crushed), so those that have taken refuge with God are unaffected by the severest of afflictions.

203. Those that have minds fixed with love on God, as the magneted needle points always fixedly to the north, never swerve from the straight path through ignorance.

204. Never worry thinking "when shall I attain this state?"; this state transcends both space and time and is neither far nor near.

205. The Real Self exists free, pervading everything by its essential being; how can He be bound by Illusion? Do not Oh *Sādhaka*, be despondent in this.³¹

206. The notion 'I am an unsteady *jīva*' has arisen by losing hold of the Moveless Self that one really is; the *Sādhaka* should efface this thought and remain in the supreme Silence.

207. To end the restlessness of the mind the following is the means: Look upon all things that are perceptible and the perceiver as the Self.

³¹The disciple should beware of despondency and the remedy for it is to realise by faith in the Guru's assurance, that bondage is unreal.

208. Even a pure thought which serves to expel an impure one, needs to be given up (after it has served the purpose), just like a thorn used for removing a thorn (in the flesh).

209. The truth of Non-Duality is to be only meditated upon by the mind; do not do any action from belief in Non-Duality; the idea of Non-duality is fit to be cherished in respect of all things whatsoever, but not with respect to the Guru.³²

210. The 'I' which is a reflection of the Self, in the mirror of the mind, is moved by the movements of the mind; to stop the movement (and make the reflection still) one should fix the mind on the Moveless Self.

211. Many seek the Self in the *Sūtra Bhashya* but do not find Him; forget not that the True Self is to be sought in the Heart, (not in books nor elsewhere outside).

³²The teaching that in the transcendental State, where the ego is not, there is only One Pure Consciousness, is given as an antidote to the superstition that duality is real, to those whom that superstition has enslaved; these are to get freed from it by meditation on it and the Quest; the teaching is *not* intended to be applied to actions, because actions proceed from the contrary idea that the doer is an individual; he is sure to mis-apply it and thus worsen the bondage he is in; the only one who cannot mis-apply it is the one that does not need the teaching—the sage. It is regrettable that this salutary injunction is not widely known. The *Sādhaka* must act always according to the best standard applicable to other men; that is, in conduct he must respect the distinction between moral and immoral conduct, as if duality were real. There is a vast gulf of difference between a Sage and a mere *Sādhaka* however eminent, and this must not be forgotten. This rule of conduct is taken from *Tatvopadesa*, a minor composition attributed to Bhagavatpada Acharaya Sankara.

212. (All) research into the non-Self, which one makes, neglecting the Real Self, is vain, like the scrutiny of (waste) hair by a barber.

213. The trembling of the body through fear, which comes to the meditator because of his sense 'I am the body', will cease when he attains completeness of being as absolute consciousness.

214. As the pearl-diver brings up the pearl by diving down weighted by a stone, so one should win the Self, diving into the Heart, weighted by non-attachment

CHAPTER III—EXPERIENCE

10. LIBERATION

215. Illumination, Happiness, Immortality, Solitude, Liberation, Union with God, the Natural State, the Transcendental State, *Nirvana*, Birth, the Good Goal, Renunciation.

216. Non-lying, Silence, the Bursting of Bonds, the Fulfilment of All Desires, the State Without Mental Taints, Peace, Having Nothing to Do, Extinction of Mind.

217. The Highest State, Perfect Devotion, the Supreme Speech, Self-Rule, the Heaven of the Self, God's Fullest Grace,—these are (some of) the names of the Experience of the Self.

218. When the mind becomes calm through the extinction of the ego, who is there subject to bondage? This ego is itself bondage and subject to bondage; there is no bondage otherwise.

219. There never was any bondage for the Self who is the only Reality (there is); He is ever free and aware; the one that is bound is the illusory *jīva* (ego).

220. Liberation is the simultaneous cessation of the thoughts, namely bondage and liberation, by the Quest 'Who am I that is bound?'

221. Those mindless ones that have attained the natural State by becoming aware of the Self, unlimited like the sky and ever-aware, were never in the darkness of ignorance.

222. The three groups of actions become extinct in the case of the *Mukta*, because his sense of being the doer is gone; the sense of being the doer was lost along with the ego, who (alone) was the doer.

223. Nothing remains to be striven for by those that have become established in this State; they should be understood to be beyond the necessity of doing anything, to have known whatever needs to be known,¹ and to be free from doubt.

224. The enlightened one that has become one with the unchanging Supreme Consciousness,—like a river that has become one with the ocean,—takes birth no more in a body.

225. Though he appears to men to be embodied, (the *Sādhaka*) should understand that he is bodiless (in fact); (for) by the giving up of the sense of 'I am the body,' his body has been surrendered to the Current *Karma*.²

226. He that is without perception of the illusory objects (of the mind and the sense) having fallen asleep in the Heart, is wide-awake; all others are sunk in the profound sleep (of ignorance).

¹The only thing needful to be known is the Self; if and when this is known, it is found that there is nothing else to be known; this is categorically stated later in No. 270.

²*Karma* (action) has been sub-divided into three distinct categories: (a) those that have brought the present body into existence, and are the source of the pleasant and unpleasant experiences of the present life, (here styled the *Current Karma*), (b) the category of *Karma* which will come to fruition in the next life, and (c) what is called the reserve *Karma*, out of which portions will pass into the other two categories in the course of successive lives. On the attainment of liberation all the three cease to affect the *Jivanmukta*; the current *Karma* has the power to fulfil itself on the body; but since he has really no body, he is unaffected.

227. He sleeps, who thinks this dream of the world to be waking, ignoring the Real Self, whose nature is constant waking; (on the other hand), the enlightened one is awake.

228. The state of Liberation may be described as eternal sleep without any waking, or as eternal waking uninterrupted by sleep.³

229. As falling from one's own natural State,—which is dearest of all and perfectly happy—is death, so being established in that State, by the grace of the holy Guru is eternal birth.

230. Birth (in the world, due to ignorance and desire) is verily for the sake of death; and (every) creature dies only to be born (again) in the world; (but) the death of the ego is real death and eternal birth (not shadowed by death).

231. As, when the sea overflows (the shore), no small creature can raise its head (but is over-borne), so when the consciousness of the Self is in flood, the ego-thought cannot arise.⁴

³The transcendental State called *Mukti* is strictly the only real waking; but from the point of view of the ignorant it is also described as sleep, because he that has reached that State does not see this dreamworld as ignorant ones do; this meaning is cryptically expressed in the Gita verse:

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ (Chap. 2:69)

⁴State of Liberation is negatively described as the Egoless State; negative descriptions are the most correct of all possible descriptions, since no positive description is possible.

232. Therefore there can be no sense of enjoyment for the *Jivanmukta*; this State of purity transcends enjoyment, being freed from the two poles of enjoyment and suffering.⁵

233. The falling off of the five sheaths of the one that has become established in the ecstasy of Silence, by the grace of the Supreme Being, was called *Nirvana* by Sugata.⁶

234. Just as the moon does not shine at all when the sun rises in the east, so when the Sun of Pure Consciousness rises, the self-assertiveness of the *jīva* ceases at once.⁷

235. Three taints (of mind) are mentioned; of these the foremost is the ego-sense in relation to the body; the other two are rooted in that; when that is lost, the (other) two will be lost also.

236. The mortal becomes immortal by that method, by which the mind, which is extremely restless, is made moveless like a lame man, free from wishes.

237. (Learned men) speak of Illumination as thought of infinite form; but thoughts are (necessarily) finite; the *Mukta* is free from thoughts, as a river reaching the sea (is without movement).

⁵All efforts at precise definition of the State of Liberation are bound to fail, because words are instruments of the ego, and this State is egoless.

⁶'Sugata' is one of the names of Bhagavan Buddha, who gave to the egoless State the name '*Nirvana*'; the meaning conveyed here is that the great teacher pointed to the same goal as the one indicated here.

⁷It cannot be supposed that the *Jivanmukta* has any will of his own; he acts according as the Divine Nature prompts him; if we speak of him as a person, we must also recognise that his personality is not distinct from that of God.

238. The Supreme Silence that arises as pure Consciousness on the death of the ego, through the mind becoming free of thoughts in the heart, is the transcendental speech.⁸

239. This Supreme Silence, the Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is the Source of all things, pervades inside and outside; it is this, which the wise call *Jnāna*.

240. This state of being the Real Self by *Jnāna* is the (real) becoming God, the eternal peace, the State beyond the three (namely waking, dream and sleep,) the treasure of independence.

11. NON-DUALITY

241. When by the Grace of God, which is easily won by devotion, the mind becomes calm in the Heart, then is experienced that One, which is (both) the light and the sky (space) by which and in which the mind and all else seem to exist.⁹

242. The sky of Pure Consciousness is like a cremation-ground, where the One alone remains, the false self being cremated (in the fire of Self-Realisation), as a forest is burnt by a conflagration.

243. No object appears in the presence of the Real Self, since it is all burnt to nothing by the fire of Pure Con-

⁸Speech and silence are identical in this State; difference arises through the diversification of the one consciousness through the ego-mind.

⁹See notes to this Section on page 53.

sciousness; the One Self alone remains, the unlimited Eye¹⁰ in that Supreme State.

244. In my Vision (of the Self) I alone am, thou art not; in thy vision, thou alone art; in the vision of the Reality, the Self is all; when the truth is sought, I am myself all.¹¹

245. How can the man who knows not the Self, and whose consciousness is limited (to the body), imagine (the nature of) the State of the Illumined One, who is aware of naught other than the Self, having won the Experience of the Infinite Self?

246. The Self alone is real; all else is illusory; therefore in the end (when the Truth is realised) all else will glide out of vision and the truth of oneself will alone be left.

247. In this State of Silence, which is egoless and mindless, who is there called 'I' to say 'I am Brahman'?¹²

¹⁰The seer is the subject and the thing seen is the object; between them is the eye. When the eye is the physical one the objects seen are gross forms, because the seer is himself seen as the body, a gross form; when the mind is the eye, then both subject and object become subtle, but still the trinity of seer, object seen and seeing remains; when the eye is the Self, then both subject and object merge in Him, and no forms gross or subtle, are seen; here the eye is not an instrument of vision, but the Consciousness without which no seeing is possible. Since in this State, where the Self is the Eye, there is nothing to see, nor any individual to see, He is described as the Unlimited Eye.

¹¹The meaning is that the multiplicity of egos, needing the use of the three pronouns 'I' 'thou' and 'he' is unreal, since there is only one Real Self behind all the egos.

¹²Self-Realisation is loosely described as that in which the soul sees itself as Brahman; but every possible description of this State is bound to be inaccurate and misleading, and needs to be corrected by another or many others, and this applies to the present description; 'I am Brah-

247-A. Various questions and answers are possible in the *language* of duality, not in the *Silence* of Non-Duality; thus did *Achārya* Ramana set forth the transcendent nature of Non-Duality.

248. This is the Vision Infinite, where there are no pairs of opposites, nor space nor time, nor action, nor its fruition, nor any other non-self, (implying) duality.¹³

249. As wetness, sweetness and coolness are really water and not three different entities, so, in the Experience of the Self, Reality, Consciousness and Ecstasy are only the Real Self.

250. In that immutable State of Reality which is taught by the *Vedāntas* there is no time, nor distinction of persons (as 'I' 'you' and 'he'), nor the triads,¹⁴

251. As the one (undivided) sky is perceived as differentiated by identification with a pot or a building, so the Blissful Consciousness (the Self) is conceived as soul and God; these two are not really different.

252. As two figures of sandal wood made to represent a master and a servant (are both sandal wood), so God and the soul are (both) the Real, namely Brahman; they are not different.

man' is just a thought and not Pure Consciousness; the thought cannot arise in the Pure Consciousness, the Real Self, because there must be an ego to think 'I am Brahman'.

¹³What was described as the Unlimited Eye is here described as Vision Infinite; the description is to be understood in a poetic, not in the literal, sense.

¹⁴In every mental process or action there are three elements, arising from the distinction of subject and object. Thus we have the trinity of the knower, the object known, and the relation of knowing; the doer, the object affected and the act; and so on; in the Egoless State these are not.

253. As one and the same woman, unchanged, is designated by the words 'wife' and the like (according to the standpoint of the speaker), so the immutable Self is perceived variously by men whose minds are engrossed in worldly pursuits.

254. The Liberated one has neither knowledge of difference, nor knowledge of non-difference. The non-arising of knowledge of difference is referred to by the wise as 'knowledge of non-difference.'¹⁵

255. Just as the ignorant see objects of sense-perception, because of their minds being directed outwards, so the one whose bonds are broken is aware (only) of the Consciousness, which is the real substance of all appearances.

256. Knowing of non-self is possible only so long as the Self is perceived as with form. When one realises the formless Self, to whom can knowledge of non-self occur?

257. Let God-forms as well as forms of the world appear so long as one does not realise the Self. When the Self is realised, to whom are these forms real?¹⁶

258. If in the Heart the State of being the Self is won by persistence (in the Quest) by the exclusion of thoughts, then the Sky of Pure Consciousness will shine alone, without anything else (subject or object).

259. The ego (seer) is unreal; this world of objects seen is also unreal; the mind that is aware of the two is (also)

¹⁵Sentence No. 338 needs to be read along with this.

¹⁶The notion of the reality of forms implies the presence of a seer, the ego; in the egoless State forms cannot possibly be seen, and hence the question whether they are real does not arise for the Egoless one.

unreal; only the Sky of Pure Consciousness remains over (in Self- Realisation) as real.¹⁷

260. I shall declare the essence of the teaching, as given in all the Upanishads: when by the death of the ego the Self is realised to be the same as that Supreme Consciousness, there remains over only the Self who is Pure Consciousness.

NOTES

To Section No. 241.

The One Reality, which is Pure Consciousness, is the sole remainder in the Egoless State; it has been explained that the mind begins to function only on the arising of the ego-sense; since this has the form 'I am this body,' the awareness of a body is simultaneous with the birth of the ego; thus the mind and the world—of which the body is a part—arise together; they are inseparable, to the extent of suggesting that the two are one, and that the world is only a subjective experience, and not an objective reality. So long as the ego survives, and the world is being seen, the Real Self is practically non-existent; on the ego being extinguished, that Self is manifest. Now the question is, does the world continue to appear after the Real Self is realised to be real? The answer is that the world goes the way of the mind, which shares the fate of the ego; this is expounded in the present section. The above section states the meta-

¹⁷See Notes to this Section on page 55.

physical truth that the mind, as well as the world which appears in it subjectively, has no independent existence, but is an appearance in the Real Self. When there is the ego-sense, the Real Self is itself seen as all this; when the ego-sense ceases finally—instead of being temporarily latent as in sleep—the Real Self, being manifest as it really is, can no more appear as the world, which it never was. Therefore it is here described as the space or sky *in* which the mind and its contents appear and as the light by which they appear. It has been explained by the Sage that the mind is almost infinite, containing in itself the outer sky and all the worlds. But the mind in its turn is contained in the Real Self; to make this intelligible the Real Self is described as being the Sky of Consciousness, as distinguished from the outer sky of ether. Being Consciousness it is not alone the substance of the false appearance of the world, but also the light that makes it possible for the false appearance to be seen and mistaken as real. This is made intelligible by comparing the Real Self to the *lighted* cinema screen, which precedes the show, and on which the moving pictures appear and pass. That the world cannot appear when the Self appears as it really is can be understood by means of the analogy of the snake in the rope; the snake is really not different from the rope; when the rope is seen, the snake necessarily ceases to be seen, since there is only one thing existing; in the same way, when the Self is realised as such, it can no more be mistaken for the world. If it be asked how it is possible for the world to appear as an objective reality, when in fact it is only a subjective appearance, the answer is that this is exactly what takes place in dreams; the mind has the faculty of creating an imaginary outside and projecting into it the world which is only inside it. Since the mind is unreal, the world it imagines is also unreal.

The question may be asked, 'Does not the world continue to appear to those who are still in ignorance?' The answer must be in consonance with that ignorance; to those to whom the ego is the self, the world will appear, until the ego, its cause, ceases. Herein may be quoted the explicit teaching of the Sage, that "the world exists if the ego exists; it is not, when the ego is not".

To Section No. 259.

Whatever is manifested and taken as real in ignorance has to be related to a cause or original source; the Real Self is *unrelated*; all attempts to trace phenomenal objects to It are bound to be unsatisfactory, as is well known to those who do not subscribe to any of the creeds, and who are therefore called '*Advaitins*'. Hence a hypothetical Source is posited which is called *Māyā* by the latter, and *Mūla Prakṛiti* by certain other credalists. That *Māyā* is unreal is neatly set forth in the book called *Yoga Vāsishtha* in the following verse:

इदृशीं राम मायेयं या स्वनाशेन हर्षदा ।
न लक्ष्यते स्वभावोऽस्याः प्रेक्ष्यमाणैव नश्यति ॥

"Oh Rama, such is this *Māyā*, who confers happiness by her own extinction; what she is in reality is never perceived; for when the truth of her is being sought she dies." Scrutiny of *Māyā* leads up to the ego as the starting point, and when the truth of the ego is sought, *Māyā* disappears

and in her place stands the Real Self; thus neither a *Sādhaka* nor one that has reached the goal can tell us what she is; but the latter knows that there is no *Māyā* in fact. That it is so is apparent from the utter failure of all scientists and metaphysicians—those who did not know that they have to look *inside* for the truth—to trace the world back to any demonstrable Cause, single or multiple; the conclusion of every school of thought is demolished by some others; thus all are proved wrong. Bhagavan Sri Ramana tells us: “*The great divergence of scientific and metaphysical theories proves that the riddle of the universe cannot be solved, except by the Quest of the True Self, by the question ‘Who am I?’*” There is no creation in the State of Self-Realisation. Find the Self and thus realise that there never was any creation.” Seeking the origin of the world is always bound to fail, just like tracing the genealogy of the son of a sterile woman.

12. CONSCIOUSNESS

261. That transcendental state, which is Liberation, is called Self-Consciousness.¹⁸ Is the Self the object of Consciousness, or is Consciousness identical with the Self?

¹⁸The original phrase is ‘*Sva-Jnanam*’, a composite word comprising two words meaning ‘Self’ and ‘Knowing’ or ‘Consciousness.’ The phrase might mean, according to the forms of Sanskrit grammar, either ‘Consciousness of the Self’ or ‘Consciousness-Self.’ In the former sense the Self must be regarded an object of Consciousness.

The question has to be considered, which of the two interpretations is the one we should accept; it is answered in the two following sentences.

262. Since it is conclusively proved by the experience of all alike, that the Self is one, the Self never becomes an object of Consciousness; therefore the first interpretation does not fit in here.¹⁹

263. The triad of knower, knowing and known does not exist in the Transcendental State; Consciousness is the very nature of the Self.²⁰

264. The act of knowing (or becoming conscious) is denied here, because in that supreme State there is no object for knowing; ignorance also is denied, because there is no other being other than the Knower.²¹

265. By the denial of ignorance it is declared that the Self is not insentient; whatever is insentient shines by the Consciousness of another; the Self shines by His own light, being of the nature of Consciousness.²²

266. For one who looks outwards (at objects) both ignorance and knowledge exist; Consciousness in the case

¹⁹Here it is pointed out that every person is Conscious of only one self namely himself; every one styles himself 'I'; no one refers to another as 'I'. So all are agreed that there is only one Self and all else is non-Self. This is due, says the Sage, to the fact that there is really only one Self, though there are many bodies. If there is only one Self, there can be no becoming Conscious of the Self at any time for the first time, as in the case of objects. Thus the first interpretation is unacceptable.

²⁰Thus the second interpretation alone remains and has to be accepted; thus the teaching of the previous sections is confirmed. The implications are set forth in what follows.

²¹The nature of Consciousness in the Supreme State is unique; knowledge and ignorance are both possible in duality; neither is possible in non-duality; hence these negations.

²²The self being Consciousness, He is self-luminous; hence this State is not one of ignorance; nor is it a state of knowledge, because there are no objects.

of the 'Knower of the Self' is free from both, always of the same nature.

267. To be is the only nature of the Self, which is ever experienced in the form of 'I am'; this is the Pure Consciousness spoken of as existing in the State of *Mukti*.

268. The State of Pure Consciousness is the moveless state of the mind, freed from thoughts, and therefore calm like a waveless sea.

269. The ignorant, whose minds are turned outwards, seek to know all things one by one; they know not that Consciousness, on knowing which all things will become known.²³

270. If one knows not the Self, but knows all things else, what is the use? But if he knows the Self, what else is there for him to know?

271. Even if one knows subtle things not easy to be known, he does not become wise thereby, so long as he knows not that Pure Consciousness by which he knows all that.

272. Knowledge relating to objects, which comes to him that knows not the Self, should be understood as ignorance; Self-knowledge—which is known as Liberation—is alone (true) Knowledge.

273. What is wrongly called knowledge is manifold having the forms of objects, like jewels (made of gold); knowledge rightly so named is one, pure and unchanging, like the gold of which the jewels are made.

²³The misconceptions that are possible regarding the Consciousness which is here described as the essential nature of the Self are here taken up and cleared.

274. Would the Enlightened one who has attained his own real nature as Pure Consciousness, consider as knowledge that which takes the forms of objects, and which springs out of the sense of 'I am the body', and is without savour?

275. This Pure Consciousness, which is the nature of the Real Self, is uncaused, eternal, transcendental, the moveless basis of the bits of objective knowledge coming to living beings.

276. Aside from this Consciousness, uncaused by objects, what other basis can there be, say, for the manifestation of this universe of moving and moveless objects?

277. True Knowledge is just the practical experience to the effect that which seems unreal, being concealed (by false appearances), is alone real, and that the seemingly real ego, called *jīva*, is unreal.²⁴

278. It is said that the Enlightened One "knows everything". How is it? In the State of being the Self, which is called Liberation, what is there to be known?

279. That delusion which is caused by knowing even a little, when the mind is unpacified, will become very much stronger if all-knowledge be gained!

²⁴The term knowledge as applied to Self, in the phrase 'Knowing the Self' is misleading, because the Self never becomes an object. The resulting misconceptions are cleared by describing the Self as Consciousness in its primal nature, the pre-existent background of objective knowledge, with this caution, that all this, being the outcome of the ego-sense, is not really knowledge; here the objects themselves are declared to have no existence apart from the objective knowledge, which is itself non-existent. From this arises a question, what is the inwardness of the saying, that knowing the Self amounts to knowledge of all things, while knowing non-self amounts to nothing at all. This is discussed in the sentences that follow.

280. To him that believes himself to be knowing little, Revelation says, that God knows all; but in truth, God who is the one infinite Reality does not know anything (because in fact there is nothing for Him to know).²⁵

281. What is (loosely) called all-knowledge is just that Pure Consciousness in which nothing other than the Self is known, not the specific knowledge of (objects or events in) space and time.²⁶

282. By meditating on the teachings of the Guru it is known that what was looked upon (in ignorance) as the forest of bondage is all nothing but the sky of the Silence of Pure Consciousness, and that all else is mere dream.

13. THE REAL SELF

283. There is in the heart of every one an *Akshara* which is alone real, the original of all *aksharas*, pure and self-luminous and the giver of Illumination. Who is there to write it?²⁷

²⁵If it be said that God knows anything other than Himself, it would amount to saying that He is ignorant! If it be said that He knows Himself the statement would be meaningless.

²⁶The expression all-knowledge must be taken in a figurative sense, not literally, because the State of Self-Realisation is utterly without duality; since God cannot be said to be without illumination. In His case also the expression is only figuratively, not literally, true. This State is described as knowing all things, because there is nothing to know.

²⁷The word *Akshara* signifies a letter of the alphabet; its literal meaning is 'unmoving'. Letters are called by this name, because they are relatively unchanging, while the words composed of them are subject to change. In its literal sense the word signifies the unchanging and unchangeable Reality, here declared to be identical with the Real Self.

284. That Silence which was taught by God as Guru (*Dkashinamurti* seated) at the foot of the banyan tree is the original Source of all words, the Sacred Word, which is never falsified.

285. That Pure Consciousness which has the form 'I AM' is the truth of the Self; this is not a thought in the mind, because the mind is dead when the ego is dead.²⁸

286. This Pure Consciousness which has the form 'I AM' and which transcends (the three known states of life in ignorance), has no rising, nor setting, unlike the insignificant ego. It is shining eternally without a break, blissful and beyond all relativity.

287. That Pure Consciousness which is the Reality, and which shines without a break as 'I am I' when the mind becomes calm, is the Supreme Bliss.

288. The three categories of the creator, the creature and the world, *Māyā* the creative Consciousness who plays with them, and the place where she plays; all these are the Pure Reality only.²⁹

289. The Infinite is (moveless) like the screen, on which the moving pictures appear; the soul, the world and God are like the moving pictures; the Infinite alone is real.

²⁸Here the ego and the Real Self are distinguished; the latter is the pure 'I AM', while the former is the 'I am' limited by the addition of a predicate, as 'I am this.'

²⁹Creation is ascribed to a power called *Māyā*; this power is a mere hypothetical entity; it is not real, because in the experience of the Self only the Self remains. Later on the unreality of creation is expounded by the analogy of the moving pictures on a cineme-screen.

290. Though these (three) are unreal, they are not different from the Supreme Reality (Brahman); but the Supreme Reality is different (from these), because It exists without these in the State of Self-Realisation.

291. He that sees the changing objects (namely the soul, world and God) does not see the unchanging Supreme Reality, namely Brahman; he that sees (that) Supreme Reality does not at all see the changing spectacle.

292. The mind (in the case of the ignorant) is greatly confounded, ignoring the Self—which is (like) the unchanging screen—and looking upon one of the moving pictures as the individual self, and other pictures as other selves, and as the world.

293. As the sky is in no way affected by the formation and dispersion of clouds, so the Real Self is in no way affected by the birth and death of the body.

294. Since there is no chance of the thought 'I am happy' arising in that State of Non-Duality, the Self transcends happiness; It is not something having the form of happiness.³⁰

295. The truth of the Real Self is that unborn and deathless Supreme Reality, which is the basic substance, by virtue of which all this, which is unreal, seems real.

296. As the screen is to the moving pictures (of the cinema-show), and as the keynote is to the changing musi-

³⁰The true nature of the Self is often described as blissful, or bliss; but this description is inaccurate; it is intended to be only tentative—until the disciple can understand a more faithful description; the nearest is that the Self is in the state of *tripti* which can be translated as desirelessness.

cal notes, so is the Real Self—the eternal, changeless Brahman—to the world, being its basic substance.

297. If it be said that the (individual) soul, who identifies himself with the body, is a body of another Soul, then the latter is the real Self; the former is certainly unreal, because he is but a body.³¹

298. This (so-called) *Jīva*, who is unsteady moving up and down like the rim of a wheel, is not the Self; he that is eternal and fixed like the axle of the wheel is alone the Real Self.

299. That sleepless, unwinking Deity who directs the intellects from within, unknown to them, is the Self.³²

300. The Real Self alone is infinite; all else is trivial; we do not see anything other than the Self, which is worthy to be won by selling the self.

301. Every deity that is worshipped appears (in a vision) and then disappears; the Self is eternally present; hence He alone is the real Deity.³³

³¹Here the Dogma of the half-hearted Dualists is scrutinised; these believers admit that out of the five known sheaths, the first three are not the Self; the fourth called *Vijñānamaya*, they say, is the Self; but having said this, they admit that this individual Self is a body of God, the *Anandamaya*, Sri Ramana tells us that the process of rejection of sheaths, by which this *Vijñānamaya* is found to be the Self, must not stop there, but must be pursued further till all the sheaths, which are bodies, are rejected when that alone remains which cannot be rejected, being not a body, but the Self.

³²The *Vijñānanaya*, who is believed to be the Real Self by the qualified Dualists, is the reasoning faculty, the intellect; this is part of the subtle body, and is insentient; it appears to be sentient, because the light of the Pure Consciousness, namely the Self, is reflected in it.

³³Devotees who do not yet know that the true God is the Real Self sometimes have a vision of God in the particular form in which they

14. CATHOLICITY

302. Know that of all faiths the best is the Supreme Silence, which arises upon the extinction of the ego, which is the seed of differences of faith.³⁴

303. That Silence, which is the actual experience of the Real Self, and in which no disputes arise, that 'It is not', 'It is', 'It is one', 'It is two fold', 'It is manifold', is alone the true faith; nothing else.

304. Since this Silence is evenly balanced toward all (faiths), the different faiths do not contradict It; as paths to Its realisation, they are acceptable.

305. The *Sādhaka* should practise (*sādhanās*) according to the faith he likes; he should not engage in disputes regarding others' faiths, letting his mind stray from its aim within, from (egoistic) attachment to his own faith.³⁵

have conceived Him. As He is really the Self, He is formless; hence these visions are unreal; therefore they disappear. They however serve to confirm and enhance the devotion of the worshipper and thus conduce to his emancipation through grace. True vision of God is Self-Realisation; it may be described as eternal God-vision, because the Self can never disappear. God-forms are in relativity; they are real while ego lives.

³⁴A faith as such is a belief cherished by the ego-mind, which is not designed by Nature to serve as an instrument for apprehending the Truth beyond relativity; hence *all* faiths are necessarily wrong in some degree and are destined to be transcended in the course of the approach to Self-Realisation. The Silence which this (Realisation) is, is not a faith in any sense; to be without any faith, not from mere scepticism, but by egolessness, is here declared to be the highest state; he that is in this Silence does not condemn, but approves of, all faiths, as shown later.

³⁵What is wrong with believers is that they are content to glorify their faiths by attacking and condemning others' faiths, instead of carrying out the *sādhanās* of their own faiths.

306. That faith which is tangled with arguments of logic, but fails to point to the people the Truth of the Self in the Heart, is (like) the noise of a bazaar.

15. THE *JIVANMUKTA*

307. If one thus knows (by actual experience) his own Real Self, who is infinite and beyond pleasure, and becomes silent and ever-satisfied, would he desire anything whatever for the sake of pleasure?

308. The young woman, named mind, suffered in the husband's home, namely the five sheaths; returning thence and coming to her home of birth, she became freed from suffering and became happiness itself.³⁶

309. Consciousness is the truth; Happiness is (that) Consciousness; the Real Self is (just this) Truth-Consciousness-Happiness; the sage is happy in the Self; the ignorant one, who is (like) a thief, does not win (real) happiness.³⁷

³⁶The return of the mind to its Source, the Real Self in the Heart, is here metaphorically described; the newly married bride sometimes suffers in her husband's home and pines for the home of her parents; she returns to it and is happy; this is temporary in most cases; but in a few it is a permanent return, owing to the irreconcilable differences; such a rare case is here referred to, because the mind can never be at home in the five sheaths, but must sooner or later return to its Source, leaving the sheaths, as has been repeatedly declared by the sages.

³⁷The Ignorant man is likened to a thief, because he wants to be happy without paying the proper price, namely his false ego. He is also rightly described as a thief because the ego is itself a theft from the Real Self, as pointed out in section 110. The happiness of sleep is described in one of the Upanishads as stolen happiness, which cannot last.

310. The happiness of sleep is like the scattered moonshine seen under a tree; the happiness of a *Jivanmukta*, it should be understood, is like the unobstructed moonshine (in an open place).

311. Man suffers, not knowing the Self who is happiness, and gets entangled in desires for objects; like the musk-deer; the Sage does not get entangled in them.³⁸

312. He whose mind is swallowed by the Light of the Self is not affected as before by anything whatever, though seeing, hearing, smelling, eating foods, breathing and walking (as before).³⁹

313. As one that is profoundly asleep in a carriage is unaware of the varying states of the carriage—(its running, stoppages and unyoking of horses)—so the one in the Transcendental State is unaware of the varying states of the body.

314. The Illumined one that is happy in the peace (of the Self), without thought of the past and the future, and like a (mere) witness of the present, is said to have the knots of bondage cut.

³⁸The musk-deer has the source of the smell of musk in itself; it thinks the source to be outside; the ignorant resemble this deer in thinking that happiness is in the objects.

³⁹The *Jivanmukta* is a riddle; he appears to be active just like others; hence many conclude that he is not illumined; others assume that these activities necessarily imply individuality, and that individuality survives in Liberation. But individuality has no existence apart from the ego. The truth is the *Jivanmukta's* state be judged by his own descriptions, because it is beyond the human intellect; here follow the sage's own explanations; these are to the effect that the *Jivanmukta* has no individuality, and is not an actor though he seems to be one.

315. He who, renouncing desire for pleasures, has become fixed in his own natural State, through extinction of the mind, is the real abstainer; not so the man who has no experience of this Self even though he abstains from food.⁴⁰

316. As the cinema-screen is not burnt by the fire of a picture (passing over it), so the *Jivanmukta* is not moved to grief by the disasters of the world.

317. This itself is the great *tapas* that he does, namely his being in his own real nature; but that *tapas* avails for the good of all *jīvas*.

318. Even in the midst of a great battle the Illumined one is not moved from that Supreme Silence, which prevails in the Heart when the noise of the thoughts of the mind subsides.

319. Can the defects of character that arise from the delusive ego occur in the case of him that is established, by the grace of God, in his own real nature?

320. It is proper that in the case of the knower (of the Self) the threefold *karma* dies with the doer (namely the ego); that the *karma* that is current remains was said to dull-witted disciples.

321. If you say, "The body being the effect of (current) *karma* it would die if all *karmas* cease"; (then answer the question), 'who looks upon the sage's body as real?'

⁴⁰The word for fasting in Sanskrit is *Upavasa*, which means dwelling near; its correct meaning is the State of Experience of the Real Self;—in this state there is no mind and hence no thought of enjoying, mere refusal of objects of pleasure, with the desire for enjoyment still persisting, is not real abstinence.

322. Or (it may be said that) the body of the *Jivan-mukta* is like a burnt cloth—seemingly real, but unreal; its form is really lost, though it seemingly retains its form.

323. Like the path of the bird in the sky, or of the fish in water, the path by which the enlightened ones attained their own Self is difficult to trace.

324. The liberated one, whose taints of mind are gone, is not the doer of actions, even while (apparently) doing them, like the listener to a story whose mind is elsewhere.

325. The bound one, because his taints of mind survive, is a doer of action even when keeping quiet, (just as) a man in a dream falls into a pit, while the body remains still.

326. If it be said: "If the liberated one has no doership, how can action be done? We do see actions being done (by him);" then understand that all his (seeming) actions are (really) done by God who is within the Heart.

327. The cessation of all thoughts, through the death of the ego, which is the root-cause of the thought of difference, is the Self-knower's meditation without meditation.⁴¹

328. The Self-Knower who has given up the ego, which is for the ignorant the obstacle to the realisation that God is all, (alone) worships God rightly.⁴²

⁴¹This and next are answers to the question; 'Does the sage meditate on God or perform worship?'

⁴²Egolessness restores to God the infiniteness that is seemingly taken away by the ego-sense; he that denies God's infinity, cannot worship God as He really is; ceasing to deny it—by giving up the ego—is better than worship; this is the meaning. For the same reason the Self-Knower is said to be, in the sentence, a greater devotee than those devotees that retain the ego.

329. By the Love (to the Self) that springs up when the profound peace is born through the final death of the false ego, the sage has the highest devotion to God.⁴³

330. The Sage that abides in the experience of the Real Self, having cremated the ego by the fire of supreme devotion (of self-surrender) saying "Obeisance to Siva", has the realisation 'I am Siva'.

331. The world abounds in deluded ones, who seek to prove the greatness of the knower (of the Self) by inventing extraordinary powers called *siddhis*; his greatness is something quite different.

332. Proving the greatness of the Sage by *siddhis* is like assessing the greatness of the Sun from the various hues seen in the dust-particles (floating in a single beam of light).

333. The Illumined one, who does actions without losing his equanimity in success and defeat, is free from illwill and the perception of difference, and is content with whatever comes by mere chance (without effort), is untainted by actions.

334. If non-doing of actions be the sign of Illumination, then even one disabled by disease would be Illumined one; the majesty of the Illumined one consists (not in not doing actions but) in being free from desire (for success) and repugnance (to failure).

335. Actions done by the *Jivanmukta*, who is asleep in the Heart, must be regarded as similar to the eating of

⁴³Love is primarily to the Self; so say the Vedantas; other love is derivative; hence God-Love becomes perfect, or rather real, only when God is realised as the Self.

food by a boy who had fallen asleep, but is partially awakened and forced to eat (by his mother).

336. Not having the sense of being the doer, he does not see anything that he is *bound* to do; being without perception of anything not the Self, he does not become subject to doubts.⁴⁴

337. The man that is averse to the experience of the Self has a taste for disputation; not so the Sage; when the ego, who (alone) could dispute, does not arise at all, then who is it that can enjoy disputation?

338. It is mistakenly said by (some) ignorant ones, that the *Jivanmukta* while seeing differences, enjoys non-differences in them; the *Mukta* never sees differences.⁴⁵

339. That eternally happy one that slays that *Sura*, 'I' the ego, who rules all the world through the six senses, is the Son of God.⁴⁶

340. He that says 'I am the body' is the (demon) *Naraka*; he that slays him with the discus, the Quest (of

⁴⁴Every one knows 'I am;' he has no doubts about it; doubts arise about the bodies, gross or subtle or about outside objects; he for whom such objects do not exist—since to him the Self is the only Reality—naturally cannot have doubts. The next sentence shows that disputes also are not possible for such a one.

⁴⁵The ignorant ones referred to here are those half-philosophers who mix up the transcendental Truth appearances in relativity. See sentence No. 254.

⁴⁶The italicised S in the word *Sura* is not the ordinary S of the English language but the palatal sibilant of Samskrit which is pronounced differently.

The reference here is to the slaying of the demon *Sura* by Subrahmanya, a son of God; this demon had made himself master of all the world by the power of *tapas* and was abusing his power. The sixth sense is the mind, the internal sense.

the Self) is Vishnu Himself; so Bhagavan Ramana—who is Vishnu—told us.

341. The *Jivanmukta* who is childlike in his freedom from passions and pure from the extinction of possessiveness and egoism, is never away from the lap of the Mother of all, which is rightfully his.

342. He who having attained the Natural State, has transcended (even) the *Sattva* (state of mind) and has no sense of being a doer of actions, may sometimes *seem* to have mental mood of the quality of *Rajas*, like a crystal mirror.⁴⁷

343. The realisation that in everything that appears there is only the One Self that is Consciousness is the (truth about) the equal vision of the *Jivanmuka*⁴⁸

344. The wish-fulfilling tree of Heaven, being insentient, (automatically) gives what is craved, whether good

⁴⁷The mind is always in one of the three states; these are called *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*; the first is the state of purity and clarity; the second is that of agitation or passion; the third is that of dullness or inertia; the *Mukta* who is in the egoless state has no mind, and none of these states; but as a clean mirror reflects objects, the moods of others may have a transient reflection in the behaviour of the *Mukta*.

⁴⁸The equal vision is a test of Self-Realisation; for the *jivanmukta* alone has it, and none else; hence it is not possible to ego-ridden ones' however cultured and good they may be. The *Gita* verse विद्वाविनय संपन्ने etc., is grossly misinterpreted by the half-baked philosophers of the present day, who assume that it relates to *Sadhakas*; it is descriptive of the *Jivanmukta*, who is denoted by the word '*Pandita*'. The reader may read this along with section 209. Misinterpretation and misapplication of Vedantic teachings has become common, because every one presumes to learn them directly from books, from incompetent teachers, or from faulty translations.

or evil; the holy Guru grants only that which is good (for the disciple), even though he may not wish for it.

345. Like bees settling on a full-blown lotus, the minds of those, who approach the *Jivanmukta*, whose heart overflows with the honey of peace, are filled with joy.

346. He that bathes in the looks of the *Jivanmukta*, who has overpassed death through experience of the Self, himself wins immortality, having become aware of Real Self through his Grace.

347. He that meditates on the true nature of the *Jivanmukta* who is identical with Siva as the Self of all through the death of the mind, obtains Experience of the Self.

16. CONCLUSION

348. My devout obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana, my own Real Self, who has appeared to me as Guru and has made me His own,—me that was in distress as if caught hold of by *Maya*.

349. Long live Arunachala; long live Sri Ramana; long live His devotees; long live (also) this *Paramartha-Dipa*, called *Guru-Ramana-Vachana-Mala*.
